



Pat Quinn, Governor
Rocco J. Claps, Director

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CONTACT:
Susan Hofer 312/814.8197

Illinois Department of Human Rights Commemorates Fair Housing Month with Annual Event

Gov. Quinn Proclaims April as Fair Housing Month in Illinois

CHICAGO – In honor of Fair Housing Month the Illinois Department of Human Rights today hosted a panel focusing on how communities are coming together to address the escalating housing crisis, which has disproportionately affected immigrant communities. The panel at the James R. Thompson Center, ["CommUNITY: Immigrant Communities Respond to the Housing Crisis"](#), was designed to recommend strategies for community integration. Speakers included representatives from the Polish, African, Latino and other immigrant communities and Terry Keleher, Executive Director of the Applied Research Center.

Governor Pat Quinn proclaimed April as Fair Housing Month in Illinois, in an effort to highlight the state's continuous hard work to combat discrimination in housing and to mark the 41st anniversary of the passage of the federal Fair Housing Act. "Acts of housing discrimination and barriers to equal housing opportunity are repugnant to a common sense of decency and fairness," the Governor's proclamation states.

In March, the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) became the first state agency to petition President Obama to sign an Executive Order that would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in federally-assisted housing. The resolution signed by Director Rocco Claps cites the discrimination routinely faced by members of the lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender community, the fact that sexual orientation and gender identity are not yet protected by federal fair housing law, and the fact that there are more than four million units of federally assisted housing in the United States. The resolution further discusses the tradition of the presidential Executive Order as a means of protecting people's rights.

"An Executive Order from the President would move the nation closer to the goal of enacting federal legislation that adds sexual orientation and gender-related identity to the Federal Fair Housing Law and the Federal Equal Employment Law," said Rocco Claps, Director IDHR.

In 2005, the State of Illinois amended the Illinois Human Rights Act to become the 15th state to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, public accommodations, real estate transactions and financial credit. At the same time, Illinois became the 6th state to prohibit discrimination based on gender-related identity. Since these laws took effect over 300 charges have

been filed alleging that the complainants were subjected to unlawful discrimination in employment or housing because of sexual orientation or gender-related identity.

The Department of Human Rights remains committed to its mission “to secure for all individuals within the State of Illinois, freedom from unlawful discrimination.” Through its outreach efforts and events such as this, the Department continues to help Illinois residents become aware of their fair housing rights and how the Department can help. If you feel you have been discriminated against in a real estate transaction, please contact IDHR at 312-814-6200 or log on to <http://www.state.il.us/dhr>.

The Resolution calling upon President Obama to issue an Executive Order that would prohibit discrimination in federally assisted housing on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity that was signed by Director Rocco Claps states:

Whereas members of the LBGT community routinely face discrimination when seeking housing throughout the United States; and

Whereas, the federal government has regrettably not yet amended the Fair Housing Act to prohibit such discrimination; and

Whereas, there are more than four million units of federally assisted housing in the United States; and

Whereas, the federal government has a special responsibility to make certain that such discrimination plays no role with respect to housing units that are federally assisted; and

Whereas, there is a long tradition of taking the initial step of prohibiting discrimination on the federal level by means of an Executive Order; and

Whereas President Kennedy issued Executive Order 11063 prohibiting discrimination in federally assisted housing on the basis of race, color, creed, or national origin saying that it was “neither proper nor equitable that Americans should be denied the benefits of housing owned by the Federal Government or financed through Federal assistance on the basis of their race, color, creed, or national origin”; and

Whereas, that Executive Order was subsequently amended by to bar discrimination on the basis of gender or disability, or familial status; and

Whereas, the State of Illinois, recognizing that it is “neither proper nor equitable” for Americans to be denied housing on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, has already prohibited such discrimination by state law; and

Whereas, President Obama stated in 2007 that, ““While we have come a long way since the Stonewall riots in 1969, we still have a lot of work to do. Too often, the issue of LGBT rights is exploited by those seeking to divide us. But at its core, this issue is about who we are as Americans. It's about whether this nation is going to live up to its founding promise of equality by treating all its citizens with dignity and respect”; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Illinois Department of Human Rights calls upon President Obama to issue an Executive Order that would prohibit discrimination in federally assisted housing on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.